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THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

VOL. LIX.

BOSTON, JANUARY, 1897.

No. 1

THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,
PUBLISHERS,
NO. 3 SOMERSET STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

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THE NEW YEAR.

The year just closed has been remarkable for international disturbances and complications in many parts of the world. Armenia, Cuba, Venezuela, the Transvaal, Trinidad, Abyssinia, the Soudan, Matabeleland, the Philippines, Zanzibar,—it is only necessary to mention these names to stir up the memory of bloodshed and cruelty, of military disaster or triumph, of rumors of great war, of delicate and puzzling diplomatic proceedings, of excitement and anxiety,—of which the year has been so full. All the great powers of the world, in addition to many smaller ones, have been involved seriously in these disturbances. In an unusual manner, it has been a year of world-disturbance. At times a tremendous conflict of arms has seemed unavoidable. Military extension, with

its growing burdens, has gone steadily on in Europe, and in naval development our own country has been unusually active.

On the other hand, the year has witnessed much indicating the steady and accelerated progress of peace, and giving promise of its early triumph. The Venezuelan excitement, with which the year began, has all been allayed and the three countries involved are now on excellent terms. Great Britain and Brazil have settled the Trinidad affair in a most commendable way. The Jameson incident has been disposed of in a way that indicates a greater disposition in England to be just in her colonial policy. A treaty of peace has closed the conflict between Italy and Abyssinia, and the peace party in Italy have showed such strength as will probably prevent any such conflict in the future. The Greater Republic of Central America has been formed, a step clearly in the interests of peace. Colombia and Costa Rico, Chile and Bolivia, Italy and Brazil, Great Britain and Colombia, Great Britain and Holland, Chile and Argentina, France and Brazil, Hayti and San Domingo, have settled or agreed to settle differences by arbitration. The United States and Great Britain are just on the point of the creation of a general treaty and court of arbitration. The peace movement represented by the peace societies, the Peace Congress, the Interparliamentary Union, and various national and special arbitration conferences, has never developed so much strength and influence as during the past year.

Will the New Year be one of peace? It is difficult to say. The Armenian plague spot remains, with few signs of improvement. The deplorable condition in Cuba continues and it is not possible to see the end. There are jealousies and strained relations between nations that bode no good. But we have much to make us believe that the sky will gradually clear and the outlook become brighter as the year goes forward. It is no time, however, to relax effort. Every friend of peace must be at his post all the year round. The cause has only just begun its great triumphs. It will prevail if by faith in God and ceaseless devotion to duty we make it prevail. We ask continued sympathy and co-operation not only

with the great cause in general but with our own work in particular, that the *ADVOCATE OF PEACE* and the society which it represents may do more efficient service in the year just opening than they have ever done before.

OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS.

The President's message, sent to Congress at its re-opening on December 7th, gave, as had been expected, unusual attention to foreign affairs, especially in reference to Turkey and Cuba. He refers, evidently with deep regret, to the fact that "the hideous and bloody aspect" of the situation in Asiatic Turkey has not changed for the better either through "the awakening of the Turkish government to the demands of humane civilization" or through "decisive action on the part of the great nations having the right by treaty to interfere for the protection of those exposed to the rage of mad bigotry and cruel fanaticism." He declares that, though none of our citizens in Turkey have so far been killed, "their safety in the future is by no means assured." Nothing has been left undone by the government to protect our citizens, mostly missionaries, residing in Turkey. The Turkish government has so far not acknowledged the validity of claims made for the pillage and destruction of American missionary property, but the justice of these claims can not be doubted and "nothing will be omitted to bring about their prompt settlement."

In reference to the intervention of the United States to stop the massacres, the President wisely says that "the deep feeling and sympathy that have been aroused among our people ought not to so far blind their reason and judgment as to lead them to demand impossible things. The outbreaks of blind fury which lead to murder and pillage in Turkey occur suddenly and without notice, and an attempt on our part to force such a hostile presence there as might be effective for prevention or protection would not only be resisted by the Ottoman Government, but would be regarded as an interruption of their plans by the great nations who assert their exclusive right to intervene in their own time and method for the security of life and property in Turkey." Anyone who knows the military strength and fanatical spirit of Turkey and the relation of the European powers to that Empire does not need to be told that any attempt of the United States single handed to "force" things there would not only be, in the President's language, to attempt an "impossibility," but that it would be an act of utter folly. Whatever power our country may have in Turkey at the present juncture must be wholly of a peaceful nature, and it is well for us and the world that we have a President who sees this clearly.

The distressing situation in Cuba the President describes in strong terms, showing that the conflict is growing more and more bitter and inhuman on both sides.

The United States has large interests in the island, both financial and humanitarian. The relations of this country to Spain are rendered very vexatious not merely by reason of our strong natural sympathy with those who are struggling for liberty but because many Cubans live in this country, who are constantly furnishing aid to the insurrection. "This government is constantly called upon to protect American citizens, to claim damages for injuries to persons and property, now estimated at many millions of dollars, and to ask explanations and apologies for the acts of Spanish officials, whose zeal for the repression of rebellion sometimes blinds them to the immunities belonging to the unoffending citizens of a friendly power. It follows from the same causes that the United States is compelled to actively police a long line of sea coast against unlawful expeditions, the escape of which the utmost vigilance will not always suffice to prevent." As to positive intervention, which has been so "vehemently demanded" in various quarters, the President expresses himself as opposed to it. The according of belligerent rights now would be untimely and "clearly perilous and injurious to our own interests." The independence of Cuba can not be granted, for there is really no settled Cuban government to be recognized. The suggestion that the island be bought would be worthy of consideration, if there existed any evidence that Spain were willing to sell. To intervene and force a termination of the strife, even at the cost of war to the United States, the President loudly hints would be unworthy of our country. "The United States has a character to maintain as a nation, which plainly dictates that right and not might should be the rule of its conduct." The President declares, after an admirable statement of the difficulties and perplexities of the situation, that in his judgment the United States should attempt to secure home rule for Cuba under the sovereignty of Spain. This would stop the conflict and ought to "satisfy all rational requirements." "It was intimated by this government to the government of Spain some months ago that, if a satisfactory measure of home rule were tendered the Cuban insurgents, and would be accepted by them, upon a guarantee of its execution, the United States would endeavor to find a way not objectionable to Spain of furnishing such guaranty." Though not yet answered, this intimation is believed to be not altogether unwelcome to Spain.

The message hints that the time may come before long when the sovereignty of Spain in Cuba shall be practically extinct and that then the United States will be compelled to act according to "the precise conditions then existing." But this country must not create the emergencies, and must only act in harmony with the requirements of public law and considerations of humanity.

The whole spirit in which the message treats both the Armenian and the Cuban questions is extremely admirable,